

TEEN WHO WAS SHOT AT COLORADO HIGH SCHOOL DIES

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Aruba TODAY

On Top Of The News Email:news@arubatoday.com website: www.arubatoday.com Tel:+297 582-7800 Monday, December 23, 2013

MIXED BAG

HOLLY RAMER
Associated Press

CONCORD, New Hampshire (AP) — The first full day of winter brought a wild mix of weather across the United States on Sunday: ice and high wind in the upper Midwest and northeastern New England states, flooding in the South and record-shattering temperatures in the 60s and 70s Fahrenheit (upper teens and low 20s Celsius) along the mid-Atlantic region.



Dagny Castelli jumps over her friend to avoid collision while sledding in Wichita, Kan. on Sunday, Dec. 22, 2013.

Freezing rain across much of eastern Canada turned roads and sidewalks into skating rinks and wreaked havoc on holiday plans at one of the busiest travel times of the year. Snow and ice knocked out power to 400,000 homes and businesses in Michigan, upstate New York and northern New England, and also left more than 400,000 customers without electricity in eastern Canada.

Continued on Page 3



Workers of a gas station celebrate with friends and clients after winning the second prize of the Christmas lottery "El Gordo" ("The Fat One") in Santa Cruz de Tenerife in the Canary Islands, Spain, Sunday Dec. 22, 2013. Millions of Spaniards are glued to televisions as the country's cherished Christmas lottery, the world's richest, distributes a bounty of 2.5 billion euros (\$3.4 billion) in prize money to winning ticket owners.

(AP Photo/Andres Gutierrez)

Spain announces winners of huge Christmas lottery

HAROLD HECKLE
Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — Champagne corks popped around Spain on Sunday as jubilant winners celebrated scooping up prizes in the country's famed Christmas lottery, the world's richest. One ticket-holder who slept in Sunday morning said he'd leapt up from his bed in surprise after hearing the television announce his ticket number for "El Gordo" (The Fat One) — the lottery's top prize, a cool 400,000-euro (\$546,200)

payoff.

Raul Clavero, 27, a mechanic living in the Madrid suburb of Leganes, then realized that four other members of his family had also bought tickets with the same winning numbers. Millions of Spaniards had been glued to their televisions as 2.5 billion euros (\$3.4 billion) in prize money was distributed in a four-hour TV show. Unlike lotteries that offer one large jackpot, Spain's yuletide drawing sprinkles a variety of winnings on thou-

sands of ticketholders.

Tales of joy and celebration were widely broadcast on TV stations, providing Spain's struggling population a rare moment of joy after another year of a brutal financial crisis. Before Spain's property-led economic boom imploded in 2008, ticket buyers often talked about spending their winnings on new cars, beach homes or fancy vacations. Now many Spaniards are just hoping to avoid having their homes or cars repos-

sessed.

"We jumped out of bed and ran out," Clavero said, still looking shell-shocked two hours later. He added that he would "pay the mortgage, that's the first thing, and then just enjoy the rest." The lottery had one change this year. For the first time, the tax man will claim 20 percent of winnings above 2,500 euros (\$3,400), as the Spanish government strives to right an economy saddled with sky-high unemployment of 26 percent. □

2013 Headlines Spotlight Disorder And Fuel Distrust

ADAM GELLER
AP National Writer

At last, the damage done by an agonizing global recession was easing. A bitter U.S. presidential election was finally over. And as 2013 began, it seemed the year might bring news headlines offering the public some reassurance or relief. The year started, after all, with an inauguration that held out the chance for at least a slight thaw in the U.S. political deep-freeze. The prospects were bolstered by economic tail winds that pushed unemployment to its lowest level in five years, lifted stocks to record highs and boosted home prices. News is never predictable, of course. But as 2013 unfolded, it seemed possible that a country worn

ington Navy Yard, and missed chances to save lives after a mammoth typhoon hit the Philippines; by angry street protests in Turkey, Egypt and Ukraine and even by a new pope who acknowledged the need to clean up the Vatican. But the dysfunction that often grabbed the headlines this year found its anchor in Washington, D.C., beginning almost immediately after President Barack Obama took the oath for his second term and a Congress supposedly mindful of the public's dissatisfaction returned to the capital. For weeks, senators on both sides of the aisle spoke of a new willingness to come together on previously non-existent common ground and attempt

might find nothing they could agree on, until even a push to compromise on expanded background checks for gun purchases that was widely supported by voters also failed. "Shame on you!" two women in the Senate gallery shouted out when the results of the vote were tallied, voicing a disgust with government that, by year's end, became the one commonality among Americans who agreed on little else. It didn't end there. Shadows were again cast over the government's ability to act fairly and functionally when scandal enveloped the Internal Revenue Service over its intense scrutiny of conservative organizations. Later, it became clear, the agency had also

services would have been grateful for such functionality. First, the Republican-controlled House refused to fund the government without cuts in spending or delays in implementing Obama's signature health care reform law, resulting in a partial government shutdown that cast a capital built on a swamp into a new morass of hot air and stagnation. The shutdown, and the coinciding worries about whether it might soon be repeated, dominated the news even as the debut of the health care overhaul it sought to derail went largely overlooked. But when lawmakers reopened the government after more than two weeks with little, if any, discernible gain, the spotlight turned on the

No doubt, the country and the world have faced far more dire crises. But the trade-off of modern technology is that we now live in an information storm that, true to this year's headlines, buffets Americans with repeated examples of institutional dysfunction, making misgivings self-confirming, said Sheila Suess Kennedy, author of "Distrust, American Style: Diversity and the Crisis of Public Confidence."

"We are marinating in an information society — sometimes a misinformation society — and I think it's much harder for people to avoid," says Kennedy, noting how the news this year fed distrust unimaginable just a few generations ago, when people were generally less aware of institutional misconduct. "I'm unwilling to say to you that life was simpler, but we thought it was simpler."

Certainly not all of the news of the past year was in that vein. After years of sanctions and threatening rhetoric, six world powers struck an interim deal with Iran limiting its nuclear activities. Federal officials, long faulted for not going after Wall Street firms, completed lengthy investigations that saw JPMorgan Chase and SAC Capital ordered to pay huge fines. Even the federal government's health care website began to function as the year neared an end.

But that did not alleviate the continuing drumbeat of news that left the public to question, not just government, but also big business, major league sports and religious institutions. The new pope, Francis, spoke to some of those misgivings almost immediately after his elevation, naming panels to help reform the scandalized Vatican bank and overhaul the church's tangled bureaucracy. But he also went a good deal further, embracing a message that has long been part of church doctrine, but addressing it as his priority: capitalism, itself, is broken, he said, warning against a culture that fosters "the globalization of indifference."

It was one more headline, one more reminder of modern society's shortcomings, even as it spotlighted the continued struggle to make our highly imperfect institutions work. The benefits of that struggle were easy to lose sight of as a year full of frustrations neared an end. So perhaps it was fitting that one of the year's last big news stories — the death of South Africa's Nelson Mandela and the remembrances of the life he lived — reminded us that resolutions to even the most intractable crises can be found when society and its leaders begin by acknowledging the problems and their capacity to address them.

"I don't know, but there are not very many heads of state who would so easily say, 'I'm sorry,'" said former Archbishop Desmond Tutu, recalling Mandela in a tribute days after his death. "And I hope that not only we, but our leaders, would emulate him." □



President Barack Obama arrives at the ceremonial swearing-in at the U.S. Capitol during the 57th Presidential Inauguration in Washington, Monday, Jan. 21, 2013. At the start of 2013, the damage done by an agonizing global recession was easing. A bitter U.S. presidential election was finally over. And it seemed the year might bring news headlines offering the public some reassurance or relief.

(AP Photo/Evan Vucci)

by infighting, the toll of tough times and tragedy, might begin to find its stride. Instead, the year's headlines were often filled with tales of dysfunction, discord and misplaced trust that added distressing new chapters to an already too-long narrative. At a time when many people say that the political system and societal institutions aren't working, the news in 2013 provided multiple sources of confirmation, both in the U.S. and abroad. It was the year that things broke down — or at least it often left many people feeling that way. Those misgivings were validated when star cyclist Lance Armstrong and slugger Ryan Braun admitted their long, proud denials of doping were lies; by revelations of the warning signals authorities missed before the mass shooting at the Wash-

ington Navy Yard, and missed chances to save lives after a mammoth typhoon hit the Philippines; by angry street protests in Turkey, Egypt and Ukraine and even by a new pope who acknowledged the need to clean up the Vatican. But the dysfunction that often grabbed the headlines this year found its anchor in Washington, D.C., beginning almost immediately after President Barack Obama took the oath for his second term and a Congress supposedly mindful of the public's dissatisfaction returned to the capital. For weeks, senators on both sides of the aisle spoke of a new willingness to come together on previously non-existent common ground and attempt

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Start of winter brings snow, ice, warm weather



This photo shows Christmas tree lights illuminating a yard as the snow falls over the weekend in Salina, Kan. A snow storm dropped almost a foot of snow Saturday night and Sunday morning in the Salina area.

Continued from front

It could be days before the lights are back on everywhere. "Thoughts are with those without power due to the ice storm," Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper tweeted. "Please stay safe." In Toronto,

warming centers were set up and the city shut down streetcar service and parts of the subway system. The city's giant Yorkdale Shopping Centre lost power. Mayor Rob Ford called it one of the worst storms in Toronto's history. "My house is freezing cold, I have little kids, we might

have to go to a hotel tonight, I'm not quite sure what we're going to do," Ford said Sunday. "It's not good to wake up and have a freezing cold shower." Hydro Toronto said about 250,000 customers were without power as ice-coated tree branches snapped and brought down power

lines. The utility's vice-president Blair Peberdy said crews were initially focusing on restoring power to two hospitals and a water treatment plant. "We don't want the water systems in Toronto to go down," he said. Anxious passengers found themselves stranded in

airports from Toronto to St. John's, Newfoundland. Canada's Via Rail advised commuters to expect delays on its routes between Toronto and Montreal or Ottawa, and police warned people to stay off the roads if possible. One Via Rail train got stuck in Oshawa due to downed power lines.

In the U.S., as of midafternoon Sunday, more than 500 airline flights had been canceled and about 3,800 delayed, according to aviation tracking website FlightAware.com.

In Canada, the severe weather conditions, which saw people skating down streets in Kingston, Ontario, were suspected to have played a role in three fatal highway crashes in Quebec and another in Ontario over the weekend. In the U.S. state of Kentucky, three bodies were pulled from the Rolling Fork River on Sunday after their vehicle was swept away by floodwaters, and a fourth person drowned in Carroll County after a four-wheeler overturned in high water. In Arkansas, authorities said Sunday that a woman was killed after a tornado with winds of about 130 mph (209 kph) struck in St. Francis County on Saturday. □

(AP Photo/Tom Dorsey)



Philanthropy and drinking a good mix at Texas bar

JUAN A. LOZANO
Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — It's become a place where you can eat, drink and be merry — but also give to charity. Since opening its doors last December, a Houston bar that donates 100 percent of its profits to local charities has far exceeded expectations, helping turn cocktails and glasses of wine and beer into warm blankets and hot meals for those in need.

By the end of this year, the Original OKRA Charity Saloon will have donated about \$300,000 to a dozen organizations. The group that runs the saloon — a collection of some of the city's best-known bars and restaurants — had expected to donate only about a third of that amount in its first year. "It was a good year. It's pretty amazing," said Mike Criss, the bar's general manager. "It's just the community coming

together." The charity saloon is one of several bars around the U.S. using that business model as a way to give back. There are similar bars or concepts in New Orleans, Washington, D.C., and Portland, Oregon. The Houston saloon, which this year was named one of the country's best bars by Playboy magazine and got a shout-out on cable TV's "The Colbert Report," has four charities competing for donations each



Jesse Mello, left, Erin Holt, center, and Matt Pankey enjoy drinks at The Original OKRA Charity Saloon in Houston. The gives 100 percent of its profits to charity and is set to donate more than \$300,000 after its first year.

(AP Photo/Pat Sullivan)

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month. Customers vote for a winner, who gets the following month's proceeds. The Oregon Public House, a similar bar in Portland, has also had success — donating more than \$15,000 to charities in its first six months of operation.

"I believe in this model, not just for us but for my city, for our state, for our country," said Ryan Saari, director of The Oregon Public House's board. "I think there is a lot of good that could be done, stepping outside of the box a little bit in terms of how we support and fund our nonprofits."

For A Simple Thread, a small Houston nonprofit that distributes kits with everyday items such as socks, toothbrushes and books to homeless individuals, the \$16,000 it got from the OKRA Charity Saloon allowed the group to do more. But it also empowered its volunteers, whose presence at the bar every day during the month it competed helped convince many customers to vote for them.

"We've never had that much money. It gave us the ability to do more for the people that we help," said Jacquie Brennan, the group's founder and

board president. "It gave us, as the smallest organization that ever won this thing, confidence in ourselves."

Brennan said the bar's donation helped her organization, formed in 2008, buy and distribute items that it normally might not be able to give away, including sweatshirts and sweatpants, gifts cards to McDonald's and passes to ride the city's bus system.

"We know we're not ending homelessness," said Brennan, who works as a lawyer. "We're not providing shelter. We're not making everything OK for them forever. We're just being kind ... to people who need your help."

That kindness was welcomed during distribution of the group's kits recently at a downtown-area park frequented by homeless individuals.

As soon as Brennan pulled up in her Prius — which local homeless individuals now recognize — about 10 to 15 men and women quickly ran up to the vehicle and gratefully claimed the kits. The group also passed out blankets — which were gone in seconds — as well as disinfecting wipes and magazines. □

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Teen who was shot at Colorado high school dies

LITTLETON, Colo. (AP) — A suburban Denver high school student who was shot in the head by a classmate died Saturday afternoon, hospital officials and her family said.

Claire Davis, 17, was in critical condition after being shot at point-blank range at Arapahoe High School on Dec. 13.

“Despite the best efforts of our physicians and nursing staff, and Claire’s fighting spirit, her injuries were too severe and the

statement that they are grateful for the 17 years they had with their daughter. “The grace, laughter and light she brought to this world will not be extinguished by her death; to the contrary, it will only get

stronger,” the statement said. The family said they appreciated the outpouring of support from the community and thanked the efforts of law enforcement, school officials and medical staff.

Friends and well-wishers had posted prayers online and raised money to help pay for Claire Davis’ medical care in days following the shooting.

The Denver Foundation said a fund had been created honoring her that would support the high school and community in programs for mental health, anti-bullying and other needs.

Karl Pierson, 18, shot Davis, who just happened to be sitting nearby with a friend as Pierson, armed with a shotgun, ammunition strapped to his body, Molotov cocktails and a machete, entered the school and headed toward the library. Davis appeared to be a random target, Arapahoe County Sheriff Grayson Robinson has said.

Pierson likely intended to track down a librarian who had disciplined him, but Robinson said Pierson’s arsenal suggested Pierson intended to hurt many others at the school just eight miles (13 kilometers) from Columbine High School, the site of a 1999 massacre in which two student gunmen killed 12 students and a teacher before killing themselves.

Pierson set off one of the

incendiary devices and fired five shots before killing himself just one minute and 20 seconds after entering the building. He knew a sheriff’s deputy assigned to the school was closing in, Robinson said at a news conference. Pierson’s original target was believed to be a librarian who coached the school’s speech and debate team. Pierson was a skilled speaker and debater on the team. The librarian, whose name was not released, had disciplined the teen in September for reasons that haven’t been disclosed. Robinson said Pierson had made some sort of threat against the librarian in September. The librarian was able to escape the school unharmed, Robinson said. Pierson legally purchased his shotgun at a local store a week before the shooting and bought the ammunition the day of the shooting. Anyone 18 and older is allowed to buy a shotgun in Colorado; only those over 21 can legally buy a handgun. Pierson, whose parents were divorced, lived at least part of the time with his mother in a higher-end neighborhood in suburban Highlands Ranch. □



Arapahoe High School students hug at a tribute site for wounded student Claire Davis, who was shot by a classmate during a school attack at Arapahoe High School, in Centennial, Colo. Davis died Saturday afternoon, hospital officials and her family said. (AP Photo/Brennan Linsley)

cal condition after being shot at point-blank range at Arapahoe High School on Dec. 13.

“It is with heavy hearts that we share that at 4:29 p.m. this afternoon, Claire Davis passed away, with her

most advanced medical treatments could not prevent this tragic loss of life. Claire’s death is immensely heartbreaking for our entire community, our staff and our families.”

The Davis family said in a

statement that they are grateful for the 17 years they had with their daughter. “The grace, laughter and light she brought to this world will not be extinguished by her death; to the contrary, it will only get

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Catching a wave that started in old Hawaii



Jon Wegener takes a shorter paipo style surfboard out of a rack of boards at his home in Encinitas, Calif. Wegener and his brother Tom, who lives in Australia, shape boards inspired by designs that date back to the late 1800's using a lightweight wood called paulownia.

(Sandy Huffaker/The New York Times)

CLAIRE MARTIN

© 2013 New York Times

In 2008, Dan Malloy, a professional surfer, received a package in the mail from Australia. In it was a thin, rectangular slab of wood with one rounded edge. It was a board like none he had ever seen, remarkable for being so slender and for lacking contours or fins. Malloy, then living in Lompoc, Calif., took the board to a nearby surf break. He propelled himself into a wave, stood and then panicked.

"I thought, 'Oh, this wave is way too fast for me, and there's no chance I can make it,'" said Malloy, who has surfed for decades.

But he did make it and soon was gliding effortlessly through the water - and really fast.

Malloy was riding a board called an alaia (pronounced ah-LIE-ah), descended from the original Hawaiian surfboards. He would begin riding its smaller, but equally fast counterpart, the paipo (pronounced PIPE-oh), a year later. Both types of surfboards are made by Tom Wegener, an American living in Australia, and his brother, Jon Wegener, who is based in Encinitas, Calif. The brothers grew up surfing in Palos Verdes, Calif., and began shaping regular foam and fiberglass surfboards as a hobby when they were teenagers and then professionally after college. They now operate separate businesses, Tom Wegener Surfboards and Wegener Surfboards, but they often share ideas and collaborate on designs.

In recent years, they have revived Hawaiian surfboard designs to innovate in a sport that had become increasingly reliant on factory production and on syn-

thetic materials, like foam and fiberglass. While resurrecting ancient innovation is not a new practice, "it tends to be very rare," said Joel Mokyr, a professor of economics and history at Northwestern University. But, he said, some innovators, inspired by nostalgia and the belief that the wisdom of the past can trump what we know today, decide to look back in time.

Tom Wegener started making alaias after visiting the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum in Honolulu in 2004 and measuring traditional boards dating to the late 1800s and early 1900s. Captivated by their simplicity, he began creating his own versions, using a lightweight, naturally water-resistant wood called paulownia.

In 2006, Jon Wegener visited his brother in Australia and saw the new designs. Almost on the spot, Jon Wegener began shaping alaias of his own.

"You see something like that, and you freak out," he said. "You just want to instantly shape one."

And so the two began collaborating informally on designs.

After returning to California, Jon Wegener continued making alaias, and from 2008 to 2010, alaias grew to be roughly 80 percent of his business. Regular foam-and-fiberglass boards, which he had been shaping and selling for 15 years, made up the rest. Customers for the alaias included well-known professional surfers, like Malloy and Rob Machado. The boards even landed roles in several surfing movies.

But there was a problem: Non-elite surfers found alaias hard to ride because they don't float as well as modern boards. □

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US Financial Front: Nonprofits seek to understand the why of giving



People have internal and/or external reasons for behaving charitably. For many a nonprofit organization, research into those motivations could be valuable.

(Michael Waraksa/The New York Times)

PHYLLIS KORKKI

© 2013 New York Times

Beyond the tax deduction, what motivates people to give money to charity? With Americans donating hundreds of billions of dollars to causes every year, it's a question that directly affects nonprofits, and new academic research is trying to offer a clearer answer. People may have internal or external reasons for behaving charitably, or they may be motivated by some blend of the two. One external incentive to give money is recognition, and charities tap into that by offering cards, gifts and special mentions on programs and websites. But a study published this year in The Journal of Marketing found that recognition seems to work only for a small subset of people - those who feel that it's important to express their moral values to other people, said Karen Winterich, one of the study's authors.

People whose moral values are more internalized (for example, because of their religious beliefs) don't need the promise of future recognition to be persuaded to donate, said Winterich, an assistant marketing professor at Pennsylvania State University. As a result, charities may want to reconsider their spending levels on things like award dinners and gifts, she said. But just because generous people are stirred by an internal moral prompting doesn't mean they are utterly selfless. That's according to research by James Andreoni, who in 1989 identified the "warm glow" theory of giving. Warm glow refers to the personal pleasure people feel in knowing they have contributed to a good cause. He defines this as an "impure altruism" because it involves self-interest, according to Andreoni, an economics professor at the University of California, San Diego. At the same

time, "acting self-interested doesn't necessarily mean acting selfish," Andreoni said in an interview. As human beings, we naturally want to be connected and helpful, he said - "it helps us stick together as communities and take care of each other." Can charities use the phenomenon of warm glow to increase donations? Amanda Chuan, a doctoral student in applied economics at the University of Pennsylvania, and Anya C. Samak, an assistant professor of consumer science at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, sought to answer that question by conducting a field study involving holiday donations to a Chicago charity that provided blankets to people in need. Research assistants

who solicited donations door to door for the charity last December followed one of two scripts. In one script, intended to stoke a "warm glow," people were offered the option of attaching a holiday card to their gift along with a personal message, like "I hope you enjoy the blanket." In the other script, researchers simply asked for donations to the charity.

Contrary to what they anticipated, the researchers found that the holiday-card approach was not particularly effective. People who could normally have been expected to give small amounts (\$5 or less) were less likely to give at all when presented with the option of filling out a holiday card. □

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Syrian airstrikes pummel Aleppo killing at least 32

DIAA HADID
RYAN LUCAS
Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Syrian aircraft pummeled opposition areas in the northern city of Aleppo on Sunday, killing at least 32 people and extending the government's furious aerial bombardment of the rebel-held half of the divided city to an eighth consecutive day. Since it began on Dec. 15, the government's unusually heavy air campaign in Aleppo has killed more than 200 people, smashed residential buildings and overwhelmed the city's hospitals with casualties. The timing of the assault — a month ahead of planned peace talks in Switzerland — suggests that Syrian President Bashar Assad could be trying to strengthen his position and expose the opposition's weaknesses before sitting down at the negotiating table. Sunday's air raids targeted several Aleppo neighbor-

hoods, but the worse hit was Masaken Hanano, where bombs fell on a second-hand market, a two-story building and a main road, activists said. The Aleppo Media Cen-

group, the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, said in a later statement that at least 47 people, including seven rebels, were killed and dozens wounded.



This citizen journalism image shows damages of a burned bus after a Syrian aircraft pummeled masaken hanano, an opposition neighborhood in the northern city of Aleppo, Syria, Sunday, Dec. 22, 2013. Syrian aircraft pummeled an opposition neighborhood in the northern city of Aleppo on Sunday, killing scores and extending the government's furious aerial bombardment of the rebel-held half of the divided city to an eighth consecutive day. (AP Photo/AMC)

ter activist group said at least 32 people were killed, and published a list of the names of the dead on its Facebook page. Another

"The medics say they are removing people in parts; they aren't sure how many there are," said Hassoun Abu Faisal, an activist with

the Aleppo Media Center. He said the bombs destroyed vehicles lining a main road, destroyed a two-story building and left a crater where part of the market was.

Activists said the airstrikes were carried out by government helicopters that dropped so-called barrel bombs, crude devices filled with explosives and fuel that are wildly inaccurate but cause massive damage on impact. Human rights groups warn that even if Syrian forces are targeting rebels with the bombs, they often explode in residential areas, killing civilians. In an amateur video posted online, a man held up to the camera a severed foot from the air raids, while crowds scrambled among rubble, hoarsely shouting "God is Great!" as they came across corpses. Flames and dust from the smashed building and cars darkened the sky. One man rhythmically smashed a

hammer against a jammed door of a vehicle containing charred bodies.

The videos appeared genuine and corresponded with other Associated Press reporting of the events depicted. The air raids have exacted a devastating toll since they began. Over the first four days alone, the airstrikes killed at least 189 people and wounded 879, according to the aid group Doctors Without Borders. Communities in the surrounding countryside have also been hit.

In the town of Marea north of Aleppo, a barrel bomb that exploded Sunday near a school used by Syrian fleeing fighting in other areas killed three members of the same family, according to Abu Faisal and the Observatory.

Schools decided to close Monday in opposition-held parts of Aleppo to avoid more casualties, citing the attacks in Marea, the Aleppo Media Center reported. □

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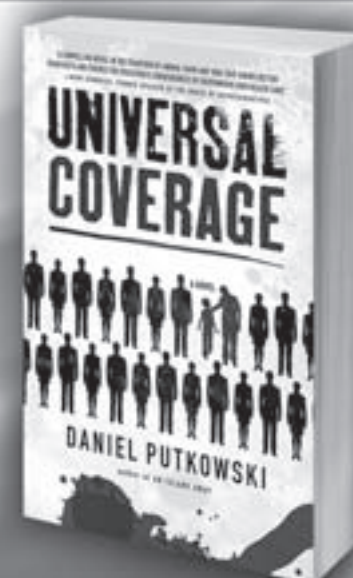
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Kiev anti-government protest draws over 100,000

YURAS KARMANAU

Associated Press

KIEV, Ukraine (AP) — About 100,000 people rallied in Ukraine's capital Sunday to demand the ouster of the president and his Cabinet as mass anti-government protests entered their second month. The rallies were sparked by President Viktor Yanukovich's decision last month to choose ties with Russia over integration with the 28-nation European Union. That deeply angered many Ukrainians, who favor the democratic structures of the West over Russia's autocratic government. After a violent police crackdown on a peaceful rally, the demonstrators turned against Yanukovich himself and have transformed Kiev into a giant protest encampment. "We will create such a hell for the authorities that

the ground will burn under their feet," said Oleh Tyahnybok, head of the opposition nationalist party Svoboda.

Yanukovich's concessions of releasing some jailed opposition activists and suspending several top officials over the crackdown have failed to end the protests. After several attempts to clear the protesters by force drew strong condemnation from the West, he now appears set on waiting them out.

But Yanukovich's stance was strengthened this week by a major bailout package from Russia to help Ukraine fend off a possible default. The aid includes a \$15 billion pledge to buy Ukrainian government bonds and a sharp decrease in the price Russia charges Ukraine for natural gas.



Pro-European Union activists gather during a rally in Independence Square around posters of jailed Ukrainian former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, in Kiev, Ukraine, Sunday, Dec. 22, 2013. Ukraine has been stricken with mass protests for over a month. Protesters are demanding President Viktor Yanukovich's resignation over his decision to ditch a pact with the European Union in favor of closer ties with Russia. (AP Photo/Efrem Lukatsky)

The opposition, however, has dismissed the agreements with Russia as a sell-out and insisted that Ukraine's future lies with

the European Union.

Opposition leader Vitali Klitschko urged the crowd to spend New Year's and the following weeks on

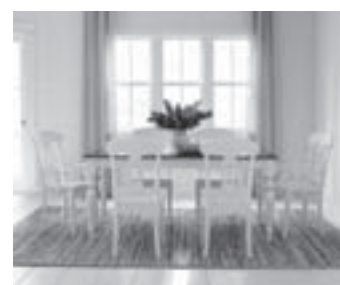
Kiev's Independence Square to force Yanukovich into calling early presidential and parliamentary elections. □

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Khodorkovsky will work to free political inmates

FRANK JORDANS
Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Mikhail Khodorkovsky, the Russian oligarch who crossed President Vladimir Putin and ended up in jail for a decade, says he plans to devote his life to securing the freedom of the country's political prisoners. At a packed news conference just two days after his surprise release from a Russian jail, Khodorkovsky said Sunday that he wants to pay back all those who had worked so hard for his own release. But he dismissed any suggestion that he might take a leading role in Russian politics, a move that would have catapulted him from being Russia's most prominent political prisoner to being Putin's main sparring part-

ner. "The time that is left for me is time I would like to devote to the activity of paying back my debts to



Mikhail Khodorkovsky, second left, stands together with his mother Marina, left, his father Boris, second right, and his son Pavel, right, at the Wall Museum, Haus am Checkpoint Charlie, prior to his press conference in the museum in Berlin Sunday Dec. 22, 2013. (AP Photo/ Michael Kappeler)

the people ... and by that I mean the people who are still in prison," the 50-year-old former oil tycoon said,

naming several business associates who remain behind bars in Russia. However, Khodorkovsky said he would not be "in-

involved in the struggle for power" in Russia, nor fund opposition parties. This may come as a relief to

Putin, who has introduced a series of laws in recent years aimed at stifling the efforts of his political opponents.

Khodorkovsky's appearance Sunday at a turbulent news conference before hundreds of journalists near Berlin's Checkpoint Charlie was charged with symbolism. The location was one of the main crossing points from East Berlin to West Berlin during the Cold War. Calm and composed in a dark blue suit, with only his shaved head betraying his recent incarceration, Khodorkovsky said his release shouldn't be mistaken as a sign that there are no more political prisoners in Russia.

"You should see me as a symbol of the fact that the efforts of civil society can

lead to the release also of those people whose freedom was never expected by anyone," he said.

Khodorkovsky thanked the media, human rights groups and Western politicians who played a role in securing his release by drawing constant attention to his case. He said they also helped him keep up his spirits during the long ordeal.

"The most important thing for a prison inmate is hope," he said, speaking in Russian.

It's not clear when, if ever, Khodorkovsky would return to Russia. Hinting that he may have retained some of his vast fortune, Khodorkovsky also ruled out reviving the business career that once made him Russia's richest man. □

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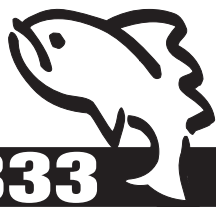


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Central Africa: A lonely battleground for France



French President Francois Hollande, left, greets German Chancellor Angela Merkel prior to their meeting at the Elysee Palace in Paris, Wednesday Dec. 18, 2013. France is finding itself alone again on an unwieldy mission in Africa and appears to be trying to push reluctant European allies to cough up troops and resources. Not for the first time, EU countries are expressing unconditional moral support but little else.

(AP Photo/Remy de la Mauviniere)

SARAH DILORENZO
Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — France is alone again on an unwieldy mission in Africa and is pushing reluctant European allies to cough up troops and resources. Not for the first time, EU countries are expressing unconditional moral support — but little else.

As chaos descended on Central African Republic and violence between Muslim rebels and Christian militias escalated, France quickly ramped up its force in its former colony this month. But suddenly, it appears France has realized the mammoth size of the task in front of it: policing a country as large as its own with a mere 1,600 troops, wading into sectarian urban warfare and persuading residents they'll be protected if they lay down their arms.

President Francois Hollande has pleaded with its EU partners in the last week to offer up boots on the ground, saying his country cannot alone shoulder the responsibility of maintaining peace and security in Africa, whose stability is important for all Europeans. France is so desper-

ate that the foreign minister announced that help was on the way, only to have several countries deny they'd be sending troops. French media reported Belgium had agreed to send 150 soldiers, but Prime Minister Elio Di Rupo told reporters that the country was only sending two transport planes and "for the moment, there is nothing else."

Germany has raised the idea of sending a medevac plane, but Chancellor Angela Merkel said Friday she had flatly refused to send troops. Britain and Poland also ruled out sending soldiers, though Poland is offering a transport plane with crew.

Hollande said he had persuaded other leaders at an EU summit in Brussels on Friday to agree to a rethink of how the bloc funds its overseas operations, and more pressingly, on whether to authorize such an operation for the Central African Republic. That could lighten France's financial burden, but it would still be up to separate countries to decide whether they want to send troops or aid. Little moves swiftly in the 28-member bloc, where

many important decisions require unanimity, and all France has gotten is a commitment from other countries to talk about it at a foreign ministers' meeting in January. France also ran into reluctance from its allies in Mali, where its troops intervened in January to push back a rapid advance of al-Qaida-linked fighters toward the capital. With fears that the country could become a base for international terrorism, France

deployed first and asked for help later. Little beyond trainers for African troops and logistical support was forthcoming from the U.S. and its European partners.

There has been a distinct note of pique from French officials, who seem dismayed to find themselves once again on their own. Defense Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian told French radio on Thursday that he wants the "maximum" number of troops from

EU countries.

But beyond its irritation, France is also facing a significantly stickier task in Central African Republic that makes it that much more difficult to handle on its own.

"This is a completely different, far messier, chaotic situation" than in its intervention in Mali, said Richard Downie, the deputy director of the Africa program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. □

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Cuba to eliminate currency pegged to dollar

ANDREA RODRIGUEZ
Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — Cuba will eliminate a currency

system, which had become a symbol of economic inequality to many islanders, Cuba's top eco-

vertible peso roughly equal to a U.S. dollar while most Cubans are paid in ordinary pesos worth about

accept convertible pesos, a mechanism designed to keep the flow of the special currency under government control.

The dual system has created special privileges for Cubans who work in tourism, and resentment among those who don't.

The government of President Raul Castro pledged in October to gradually unify the two currencies in order to prevent shocks like spikes in inflation. Many Cuban economists said the process would take years. On Friday, Vice President Marino Murillo told parliament that the peso pegged to the dollar, known as the CUC, would eventually disappear, the first time the government has explicitly said that. He promised that savings in the convertible pesos would retain their value until the change took place. "People who have the convertible Cuban peso

(CUC), whether in the banks or kept at home, will not lose any financial capacity when the dual monetary system is eliminated," said Murillo.

He did not say when the change would go into effect.

The double monetary system was established in 1994 amid an economic crisis sparked by the fall of the Soviet Union, which heavily subsidized Cuba for decades.

It was designed to allow Cuba to receive hard currency needed for international trade from the outside world while insulating the rest of the communist economy from market influences. In October, the official newspaper Granma said that the government's first step would be to allow several businesses that currently accept only convertible pesos, or CUCs, to do business in ordinary Cuban pesos, or CUPs. □



Cuba's President Raul Castro, left, greets parliamentarians as Vice President Miguel Diaz-Canel, right, applauds during the opening of a twice-annual legislative sessions, at the National Assembly in Havana, Cuba. (AP Photo/Ismael Francisco)

pegged to the dollar as part of a move to end its unique double-currency

nomics official said this weekend. Tourists currently use a con-

four cents. Many goods are easier to find in government stores that exclusively

Honduras: Feared 'Tiger' is out as top cop

ALBERTO
FREDDY CUEVAS
Associated Press

ARCE

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras (AP) — Honduras' national police chief, a man who intimidated many in this violent country with a fearsome reputation colored by allegations he ran death squads a decade ago, is out of a job. Gen. Juan Carlos Bonilla was removed as chief late last week by President Porfirio Lobo, who said he acted after consulting with President-elect Juan Orlando Hernandez, who takes office next month. No reasons were given, but the change had been widely expected because of the impending change

in administrations. While acquitted of 2002 charges that he directed the killings of criminals as a lower-level official, Bonilla was dogged by the allegations, and critics questioned why he was named chief of a police force often accused of abuses and corruption. Supporters praised Bonilla as the right man for the post, noting he has never been linked to organized crime. The firing had been viewed as likely since the Nov. 24 election of Hernandez, who has argued that a cleanup effort failed to weed out corrupt officers and shake up the National Police, which is Honduras' only police force. □



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CMB Employees made wishes of 169 kids a reality



- At the same time CMB made a donation of 10,000 florins to "Dare to Dream Foundation" of Xander Bogaerts.

ORANJESTAD – Last week Wednesday, employees of CMB Bank together with Santa Clause, held a Gift Party for 169 kids of 28 different schools. This action is an initiative

that started 16 years ago, where the employees buy gifts for kids that makes a wish. Through schools and other organizations that comes in contact with the children and in that way make their wishes come true.

On that night, the Noord Branch had for sure more than 400 gifts and 250 people celebrating this beautiful

cause. Teachers of the schools couldn't thank the employees enough for this nice gesture.

It's remarkable that the gifts were bought by the employees, with their own money. Making this a very nice initiative and for sure shows the culture that lives in the bank for giving back to the community.

This time, besides of Santa

Clause, the children had a special visit of Aruba's most famous ballplayer till now, Xander Bogaerts.

He took his time to greet and give attention to all the kids and also to share some motivational words and inspiration. General Director of the CMB, Javier Wolter also gave a surprise, announcing a donation of 10,000 florins to the

foundation that the young ballplayer has as a cause to help children stay in the right track.

This was an afternoon filled with emotion and which will stay in the memories of all the children who were there. Here you can see part of the gifts with the organization committee together with Xander Bogaerts.

Masha Pabien! □

Aruba Marriott displays life-size holiday Gingerbread House!

PALM BEACH - An annual holiday tradition at the Aruba Marriott Resort and Stellaris Casino is the gingerbread display in the resort lobby. This year Executive Sous Chef Miguel and Sous Chef Charles took it up a notch and created a life-size gingerbread house for guests to enjoy. Constructed with 100 pound of gingerbread dough, 50 pound of white icing, 65 pound of assorted candy (marshmallows, gummy bears, liquor-

ish, candy sticks, popcorn and cookies), the 80sq ft gingerbread house creates a magical entrance for guests and associates.

It took Sous Chef Charles and his team three working days to create the gingerbread bricks and icing from scratch, to assemble and decorate the house.

The Aruba Marriott Resort invites everyone to pass by and take a photo with the life size gingerbread house. Happy Holidays! □



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tersports such as wave runners, parasailing, tubing and much more. Our desks are located at Casa del Mar (pool deck), Westin Hotel lower lobby, Westin activity center (pool deck), Playa Linda resort next to the juice bar, Holiday Inn Desk and at the Concierge & Pelican Pier desk located between Holiday Inn hotel & Playa Linda Resort. Pelican Nest Restaurant of-

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ful platter of exquisite fish, yellow rice and rich vegetables is what you will be served from Chef Hernandez' kitchen every Monday. Whether choosing Fried Fish Basket for only \$15 or a delicious Red Snapper for \$20, you wish it was Monday every day! Bugaloe

is known for fun and craziness, so it was only logical Chef Marc Hernandez likes to go wild when it comes to his cooking. Caught in the morning, served at night is the true Bugaloe way, maybe this explains its popularity from the start. Crazy Fish Monday is served

from 5.30 p.m. till 10 p.m. Bugaloe Beach Bar & Grill is open daily from 9 a.m. till midnight. Start your day of right with a delicious cappuccino, or walk in to enjoy a casual lunch in between sunbathing. A few nights a week Bugaloe is host to some of the best live bands of Aruba,

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Manning sets NFL TD passes record with 51

KRISTIE RIEKEN
AP Sports Writer

HOUSTON (AP) — Peyton Manning has broken Tom Brady's NFL record for most touchdown passes in a season with 51.

The Denver Broncos quarterback did it on a 25-yard pass to Julius Thomas with 4:28 remaining in the game Sunday against the Houston Texans. Just 2 1/2 minutes earlier, he tied the mark with a 20-yard pass to Eric Decker.

"I really feel like it's a team accomplishment, certainly an offensive accomplishment," Manning said. "There's a lot of people that played roles in this."

Manning made the throw to Thomas and walked toward the end zone, where his teammates patted him on the head. He then took off his helmet and walking to the sideline and pumped his fist once.

Continued on Page 21



Denver Broncos' Peyton Manning (18) is hit by Houston Texans' Joe Mays (53) as he throws during the third quarter of an NFL football game on Sunday, Dec. 22, 2013, in Houston.

Associated Press



Austria's Marcel Hirscher celebrates at the finish area after winning an alpine ski, men's World Cup giant slalom, in Alta Badia, Italy, Sunday, Dec. 22, 2013.

Associated Press

ANDREW DAMPF
AP Sports Writer

ALTA BADIA, Italy (AP) — Two-time defending overall World Cup champion Marcel Hirscher won the challenging giant slalom on the Gran Risa course with two solid runs Sunday and attributed his vic-

tory to a fixed screw in his equipment setup. Favorite Ted Ligety finished third at the site of one of his most memorable victories and all of a sudden no longer looks dominant with the Sochi Olympics less than 50 days away. Hirscher, an Austrian,

Hirscher wins, Ligety 3rd in Alta Badia GS

clocked a two-run combined time of 2 minutes, 37.45 seconds for his second consecutive GS win after a victory in Val d'Isere, France, last weekend.

Alexis Pinturault of France finished second, 0.35 seconds behind, and Ligety, the American who won by a massive margin last year, was 0.41 back.

"I'm happy to see that Ted is beatable and human," said Hirscher, adding that a small change he made in his setup three days ago made a big difference.

"We worked really hard over the past year and

sometimes we didn't know if we were doing exactly the right thing. There are so many different (variables)," Hirscher said. "At the end it was just a small screw in my setup. ... That helped me in the turns and to drift less." Not surprisingly, Hirscher would not provide more details about the screw or where exactly it was located.

Ligety struggled with the soft conditions — a sharp change from past seasons when the Gran Risa was extremely icy — and dropped 60 points behind Hirscher in the giant slalom standings.

"I'm happy with third," Ligety said. "I don't feel like I skied my best but that's not easy to do every time." Having won the opening two GS races of the season, Ligety failed to complete two events in Val d'Isere last weekend then also skied out in Friday's super-G in Val Gardena.

"I've had a tough European trip and it's nice to put in a decent result," said Ligety, who will head home Tuesday for a brief break. "It's not been an easy December for me."

Continued on Page 22



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U.S. wins Duel in the Pool tiebreaker vs Europe

GLASGOW, Scotland (AP)

— In the tightest finish yet, the United States preserved its 100 percent winning Duel in the Pool record on Saturday by beating the European All Stars in a tiebreaker race.

Both teams were locked on 131 points after 30 events over two days at the Tollcross Swimming Centre in Glasgow, after the U.S. fought back from 68-54 down on Friday.

In the extra, final race — a mixed 4x50-meter medley relay — Simone Manuel anchored the U.S. to victory, finishing 0.2 seconds ahead of British swimmer Frances-

ca Halsall.

The U.S. has won all six Duels in the Pool — billed as the Ryder Cup of swimming — facing Australia in the first three editions before taking on the Europeans.

The tight finish was in contrast to the first U.S.-Europe encounter in Manchester in 2009 when the Americans claimed a 185-78 victory.

Saturday didn't start well, though, for the defending champions as the Europeans took maximum points from the first race.

Mireia Belmonte of Spain, who won the 400 individual medley and the 400 freestyle on Friday, came out

on top in the 800 freestyle, leading home Lotte Friis of Denmark and Jazz Carlin of Wales.

Five points are awarded for a win, three for second place, and one for third.

But Michael McBroom set the tone for the U.S. recovery in the 800 free, breaking the national record in 7 minutes 33.99 seconds.

Michelle Coleman took top spot in the women's 200 freestyle but there was another American success for the men, with Conor Dwyer securing the win.

The U.S. fightback continued, with Olivia Smoliga and Eugene Godsoe both

winning their respective 100 backstroke events.

Europe still held onto a 92-84 lead after the opening six events. But U.S. successes followed in the 100 breaststroke, through Jessica Hardy and Kevin Cordes, to leave the teams locked at 97 points each. Belmonte, though, was proving to be one of the outstanding talents of this event. And another win — this time in the 200 butterfly — allowed the Europeans to edge ahead again. But the competition remained on a knife edge as American swimmer Tom Shields won the men's race.

A European win followed in the 50 freestyle courtesy of Halsall, but the Americans helped themselves to maximum points in the men's event led by Jimmy Feigen. Wins for Sophie Allen and Dwyer in their 200 individual medley races again saw Europe and the U.S. level on 124 points heading into the final 4x100 freestyle relays. A world record in the women's race was set by Europe with a time of 3:27.70 before the U.S. men responded with a victory. It took one final, extra victory to allow the U.S. to retain the trophy in dramatic fashion. □

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NFL Capsules

Bengals clinch playoffs, now 7-0 at home

The Associated Press

CINCINNATI (AP) — Vincent Rey returned an interception 25 yards for a touchdown as Cincinnati's defense set up another fast start. Andy Dalton threw four touchdown passes. The Bengals (10-5) remained perfect at home and clinched an unprecedented third straight playoff appearance when Miami lost at Buffalo. In his past four home games, Dalton has thrown for five, three, three and four touchdowns. The Bengals have topped 40 points in each of their past four home games, a club record. The Vikings (4-10-1) had knocked off playoff contenders Chicago and Phil-

adelphia in the past three weeks. Even with Adrian Peterson back from a foot injury, they couldn't keep up. The Vikings had allowed the second-most points in the league heading into the game. They gave up 40 for the third time this season. **CHIEFS 23, COLTS 7** **KANSAS CITY, Missouri (AP)** — Andrew Luck threw for 241 yards and a touchdown, Donald Brown ran 51 yards for another score in a potential preview of an AFC wild-card game. The Colts (10-5), who have already wrapped up the AFC South, took advantage of four turnovers by the Chiefs (11-4) to win for the fifth time in their last six

tries against Kansas City. If Indianapolis ends up as the No. 4 seed in the playoffs — the Chiefs are assured the fifth seed — the teams will meet again in the warmer environs of Lucas Oil Stadium. After missing his first field-goal attempt, Adam Vinatieri hit his next three despite frigid temperatures and swirling winds at Arrowhead Stadium. He came into the game needing one point to pass fellow kicker Jason Elam (1,983) for the seventh-most points in NFL history. Alex Smith threw for 153 yards, but he fumbled once and was picked off twice after throwing just six interceptions in his first 14 games. Jamaal Charles



Cincinnati Bengals strong safety George Iloka (43) and cornerback Dre Kirkpatrick (27) break up a pass intended for Minnesota Vikings wide receiver Jerome Simpson during the second half of an NFL football game, Sunday, Dec. 22, 2013, in Cincinnati. Iloka intercepted the pass. **Associated Press**

ran for 106 yards and the game's opening score. **BILLS 19, DOLPHINS 0** **ORCHARD PARK, New York (AP)** — The Dolphins had a three-game winning streak snapped and are in jeopardy of missing the playoffs for a fifth consecutive season. With the loss, Miami (8-7) needs help from other teams. Miami hosts the New York Jets next weekend. The Dolphins' loss clinched the AFC East for New England. Kyle Williams had two of Buffalo's season-best seven sacks to key a stifling defensive performance. Fred Jackson had 111 yards rushing and scored on a 9-yard run, while the Bills limited the Dolphins to a season-low 103 yards and six first downs. The Bills (6-9) closed their home schedule with seven sacks for 56 this season, breaking their previous high of 50 during a 14-game season in 1964. The shutout was Buffalo's first since a 23-0 win over Washington at Toronto on

Oct. 30, 2011. And it was the Bills' first shutout at Ralph Wilson Stadium since a 21-0 win over Miami on Dec. 17, 2006. **COWBOYS 24, REDSKINS 23** **LANDOVER, Maryland (AP)** — Tony Romo recovered from a bad interception and rallied the Cowboys from a nine-point, fourth-quarter deficit. He found DeMarco Murray for a 10-yard touchdown pass on fourth down with 1:08 remaining. The victory ended a two-game Dallas skid — as well as a five-game December losing streak — and sets up a winner-take-all regular season finale for the NFC East title next week, when the Cowboys (8-7) host the Philadelphia Eagles. The Redskins (3-12) lost their seventh straight, the second in a row by one point. Pierre Garcon (11 catches, 144 yards) broke Art Monk's single-season franchise reception record, while coach Mike Shanahan clinched his worst record in his 20 seasons as a head coach. □

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Manning

Continued from Page 18

His teammates came out to greet him and he gave dozens of high-fives as he grinned and walked to the bench.

Decker picked up the ball after Thomas dropped it and tucked it in the side of his jersey, where it remained as he walked off the field.

Manning entered the game with 47 TDs and his first touchdown came on a 36-yard pass to Demaryius Thomas in the second quarter. The second one was a 10-yard throw to Decker early in the fourth period.

"We're not surprised at what Peyton does," Julius Thomas said. "The work he puts in every day, you see how he demands the best from himself. Fortunate for us, we're the beneficiaries of that."

Brady set the record, which previously belonged to Manning, in 2007. Manning had established the record by throwing 49 touchdown passes in 2004.

"They were able to make the big plays and we weren't able to stop them from doing that," Houston safety Shiloh Keo said.

Surrounded by the best targets he's ever had, operating a turbocharged assault with a body that's much less a question mark, Manning is putting up record numbers like he did in that remarkable 2004 season.

That year, Marvin Harrison, Reggie Wayne and Brandon Stokley all topped 1,000 yards receiving. Manning established NFL records with 49 touchdown throws and a 121.1 passer rating, marks since surpassed by Brady and Aaron Rodgers (122.5).

Manning was the NFL's 2012 Comeback Player of the Year, showing he was every bit as good as before.

He's having his best season at age 37, just two years removed from the four neck surgeries that weakened his right triceps and threatened his career. He hadn't missed a start with the Colts before 2011.

Last week, Houston interim coach Wade Phillips said Manning's season was "just the best year ever of any quarterback."

Manning began 2013 by becoming the first quarterback since 1969 to throw for seven touchdowns in a game. Earlier this month he broke an NFL record he held with Brett Favre for most playoff appearances when he qualified for his 13th trip to the postseason.

Although he could set several more standards this season, Manning has insisted his only concern is the Broncos' win-loss record. He wants desperately to gain home-field advantage and the top seed in the AFC playoffs again.

Manning finished Sunday's game with a career-high 5,211 yards passing. He is 266 from surpassing the sin-



Denver Broncos' Peyton Manning, center, celebrates with teammates after he threw a touchdown pass against the Houston Texans during the third quarter of an NFL football game on Sunday, Dec. 22, 2013, in Houston. The touchdown was his 51st of the season.

Associated Press

gle-season record for yards passing set by Drew Brees in 2011.

Manning threw 37 touchdown passes last year, which broke a franchise

record of 27 set by John Elway in 1997 and tied by Jake Plummer in 2004. □

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Liechtenstein's Tina Weirather celebrates at the finish area after winning an alpine ski, women's World Cup giant slalom, in Val D'Isere, France, Sunday, Dec. 22, 2013.

Associated Press

Hirscher wins

Continued from Page 18

JEROME PUGMIRE
AP Sports Writer

VAL D'ISERE, France (AP) — World Cup leader Tina Wierather of Liechtenstein protected her lead from the first run to win the first giant slalom race of her career on Sunday, her second victory of the season and third of her fast-improving career. "Today was a very great day for me. It was always my dream to be good in GS," Wierather said.

"I took quite a long time to get there. It feels awesome to have my first win (in GS)."

Wierather leads overall with 595 points from Lara Gut (568), who finished second, and Maria Hoefl-Riesch of Germany (535).

"It's cool to have the chance to fight for it. It's the first time I've been so consistent. But it's only December so I'm not thinking about that," Wierather said. "It's just that I've been healthy for some years

Wierather wins women's GS; Mancuso doesn't finish

now and I could improve a little bit every summer. I feel very strong and feel ready for more than just downhill, but also super-G and GS."

Julia Mancuso of the United States did not finish the second run. After winning a super-G race at St. Moritz last weekend, the 24-year-old Wierather secured her third career win and 13th podium finish with an overall time of 2 minutes, 24.10 seconds.

"It's a process of many years. I tried to improve my technique, my physical performance. It's like a big puzzle and at the moment it looks like it is working," Wierather said. "I used to play tennis until I was 12. I never liked this battle. In skiing it's you against the hill and you see the time. You just fight the hill and not the other girls. That's what I like about ski racing."

Wierather was 0.75 seconds clear of Gut, who was third after the first run, and 0.95 ahead of Sweden's Maria Pietilae-Holmner, who had been second.

Italian Federica Brignone was fourth, ahead of the former World Cup winner Hoefl-Riesch.

Gut has four World Cup wins this season, and five podiums, but had failed to finish the last two GS races. "It's always fun to be on the podium and to make points," the 22-year-old said. "But I was skiing good even in Beaver Creek and St. Moritz before going off course."

Pietilae-Holmner, the GS runner-up at the 2007 worlds, secured her first World Cup podium in GS.

"It's a perfect Christmas present," the 27-year-old said. "I had two seasons with both knee injury and shoulder injury. I'm back without injury so I can put the energy in the right things."

World slalom champion Mikaela Shiffrin was eighth, improving from her 12th-place finish in slalom at Courchevel on Tuesday. The previ-

ous weekend, the 18-year-old had failed to finish another GS in the Swiss resort of St. Moritz.

"I was really tired coming from the U.S. to here (Europe). I had to re-think how I was doing things, getting my recoveries and stuff," Shiffrin said. "Before this race I actually got some rest and I felt a lot better today, which means that I just have to ski faster. I'm happy with the top 10."

She thought that she could have done better, however, with more preparation.

"I think the first run was a little bit straighter than I thought it would be from looking at it on inspection. It's a lesson for next time," she said. "I have to be able to see it's a little straighter so I can go, because some of the other girls hammered it and they were really fast, and that's where I lost some time."

Defending overall champion Tina Maze, who was second in Saturday's downhill, improved in her second run to finish 11th.

The Slovenian is still looking for her first win of the season and says she feels mentally tired.

"Maybe it's the result of the program I have. Since St. Moritz every day I'm in ski boots, skiing and training and it's tough to be in shape every day and to concentrate 100 percent," she said. "I really need two days' break now, just to relax a little bit. I think it's pretty tiring when you're going up and down and fighting every day to be positive."

The 30-year-old Maze looked set for a competitive time but almost fell on her first run.

"I was skiing really good so I'm excited about my skiing, but with that mistake it was just too hard to come in front and be relaxed in the second run," she said. "I was attacking too much and on this snow when you push too much it's not a good idea." □



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AP source: Choo agrees to 7-year deal with Texas

STEPHEN HAWKINS
AP Sports Writer

Free agent outfielder Choo Shin-soo of South Korea agreed to a \$130 million, seven-year contract with the Texas Rangers, a person familiar with the deal told The Associated Press on Saturday.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity because there was no official announcement about the deal that is pending a physical for Choo. That person said the physical is expected to be done before Christmas, and that any formal introduction in Texas likely wouldn't come until after the holiday on Wednesday.

The deal came a month after the Rangers acquired five-time All-Star first baseman Prince Fielder in a trade with Detroit for second baseman Ian Kinsler, their primary leadoff hitter. Texas now gets the best offensive player left in free agency, with both additions to be under contract through the 2020 season.

Choo's deal, worth about \$18.6 million per season, is the third highest this off-season. Second baseman Robinson Cano got \$240 million over 10 years from Seattle and outfielder Ja-

coby Ellsbury, like Choo, a client of agent Scott Boras, signed a \$153 million, seven-year contract with the New York Yankees.

Choo could be at the top or in the middle of the Texas lineup. He was Cincinnati's leadoff hitter for 143 games last season, when he had a .423 on-base percentage with 20 stolen bases and 21 home runs.

The Rangers missed the playoffs for the first time in four years, with 730 runs scored their fewest in a non-strike season since 1992. Texas, which went to its only two World Series in 2010 and 2011 and lost in the American League's first wildcard game in 2012, lost at home to Tampa Bay in a wild-card tiebreaker.

Choo's deal calls for salaries of \$14 million in 2014 and 2015, \$21 million in 2016 and 2017, and \$20 million in each of the last three years of the deal. He can earn a bonus for finishing in the top five of the AL MVP balloting — from \$250,000 as the winner to \$50,000 for fifth place.

He would get a \$150,000 bonus for being a World Series MVP, and an additional \$100,000 for being an AL championship series



Cincinnati Reds center fielder Shin-Soo Choo (17) fields during a baseball game against the Atlanta Braves Sunday, July 14, 2013 in Atlanta.

Associated Press

MVP or an All-Star, or for winning a Silver Slugger or Gold Glove award.

There will also be a limited no-trade clause, with Choo able each year to submit a list of 10 teams he can't be dealt to without his consent.

Choo has a .288 career batting average and .389 OBP with 104 home runs and 427 RBIs in 853 major league games for Seattle (2005-06), Cleveland (2006-12) and Cincinnati.

The 31-year-old had at least 20 homers and 20 sto-

len bases three times, including last season.

While Choo started 150 games for the Reds in center field,

he will likely play left field for Texas. The Rangers have Leonys Martin in center and Alex Rios in right. □

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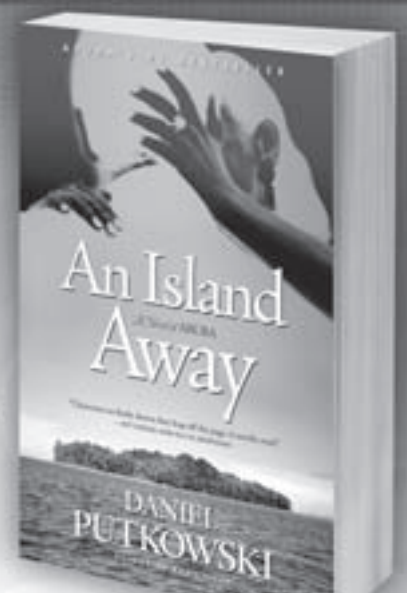
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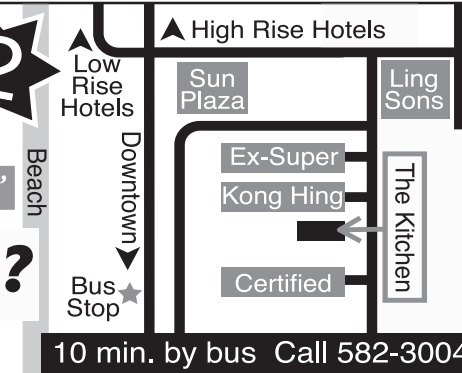


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Fed to crack down on risk-shifting deals

PETER EAVIS

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A major banking regulator moved this weekend to curb a type of financial maneuver that banks can exploit to make themselves look stronger than they actually are. The Federal Reserve notified large banks that it was taking aim at so-called risk transfer transactions. Supporters of these complex deals say that they allow banks

side of risk transfer trades. While risk-transfer deals have been around for years, the temptation to use them has risen as regulators have required banks to increase their capital. To get capital levels up, banks have cut their borrowing and now fund more of their operations with equity they have raised from selling shares. Such changes have made banks more stable. But some bankers

bail out the entity because of its connection with it. In its guidance, the Fed noted that the bank would still have an "implicit obligation" to the transferred risks. "Firms are discouraged from entering into such transactions," the Fed wrote. Its hard line on these types of arrangements may have been motivated by events during the financial crisis. Banks suffered big losses after they made



Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke listens at left as Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew speaks at the Treasury Department in Washington. (AP Photo/Charles Dharapak)

to protect themselves from future losses on loans or other assets. But regulators are concerned that banks may at times use them to evade the stiffer regulations that have been introduced since the 2008 financial crisis.

In its guidance, the Fed said it would "strongly scrutinize" risk-transfer deals that have a substantial impact on a bank's balance sheet. Banks that have recently used such transactions include Citigroup, Credit Suisse and UBS. Pension funds, hedge funds and private equity firms may often be on the other

claim the changes have made it harder for banks to achieve certain measures of profitability. Risk-transfer deals may offer a way for banks to bolster profits while avoiding the changes intended to make them safer. A bank, for instance, may have entered a risk-transfer deal with a financial entity with which it is affiliated. There is a big danger with such an arrangement. If the affiliated entity cannot ultimately bear the losses that the bank has transferred in the risk-transfer deal, it may end up failing. And the bank may then have to

good on obligations that arose from shadowy deals with affiliates.

The Fed, however, said it would be more tolerant of risk-transfer deals if they were struck with entities that were truly separate. But it will still scrutinize these to make sure they do not lead to banks' skimping on capital. A bank may have \$100 of loans, against which it has to hold \$8 of capital. To free up all that capital and get its capital requirement down to zero, the bank may do a deal that transfers the risks of all the loans to an unaffiliated entity. □

U.S. is an industrial standout among advanced economies

FLOYD NORRIS

© 2013 New York Times

Industrial production in the United States has returned to its prerecession level, nearly six years after the downturn began and more than four years after the recession officially ended.

The Federal Reserve reported this week that the index of industrial production rose to 101.28 in November, a gain of 1.1 percent from October. It was the first time the figure had risen above the 100.82 level of December 2007, the month the recession officially began.

Such a performance is hardly impressive, given that before the current cycle the only times industrial production did that poorly over such a period was during the Great Depression and in the years after World War II, when the country was demobilizing and ending or sharply reducing weapons production.

But it stands out among advanced economies. The latest composite figure for advanced economies shows production at about 7 percent below the predownturn level - a level that has not changed much since 2011. Moreover, the recovery seems to have halted in Germany while the decline has resumed in some of the less competitive eurozone economies.

A significant part of the U.S. recovery is a result of increased energy production, a development that is not cyclical, but is, instead, related to the boom in shale gas production, which has driven down the price of natural gas. That price decline, in turn, has helped increase production in other areas, where lower energy costs improve the competitiveness of American companies.

Overall, production of business equipment fell much more rapidly than did production of consumer goods when the recession was at its worst. But since then business equipment has recovered fully while consumer goods are still being produced at a rate below that of 2007.

Two of the most cyclical areas of the economy show sharply different courses. Production of motor vehicles and parts plunged by more than half from the prerecession level, hitting bottom in early 2009, when declining values of stocks and real estate led Americans to avoid the risk of buying a new car. Since then, however, production has more than doubled from the low and climbed in November to the highest level ever, 14 percent above the prerecession level.

Measured by number of vehicles, the government said that U.S. production climbed in November to an annual rate of 11.6 million vehicles, more than triple the level of January 2009 and the highest since April 2006.

Construction-supplies production did not fall as rapidly as did motor vehicle production. But it has recovered only half of the decline, reflecting the continuing weakness in construction activity.

Internationally, Germany is close to recovering all the losses since the end of 2007. In Italy, production has fallen back to where it is only a little higher than it was at the low point in 2009. In Spain, production is well below 2009 levels although it has recovered a little this year. The decline in Britain was not as large, but production there, too, is now lower than it was in 2009.

Industrial production has completely recovered in many emerging economies. The latest figures indicate production in India and South Korea is about 20 percent above where it was at the end of 2007. In China, the latest figure is about 90 percent higher than it was before the recession began in the United States.

Thus, while the U.S. recovery looks good compared with those of most other advanced economies, this recovery is far from impressive relative to past recessions, let alone to the performance of some emerging economies. □

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Facebook prices secondary stock offering at \$55

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Facebook has priced a secondary offering of its stock at \$55.05 a share in a deal that will generate a \$2.3 billion windfall for CEO Mark Zuckerberg.

The terms announced Friday are just slightly below the \$55.12 closing price of Facebook's stock Friday. The stock is now well above the \$38 price set in Facebook's initial public offering 19 months ago, rebounding from a trough of \$17.55 last year fueled by concerns about the on-line social network's slowing growth and ability to sell ads as more of its traffic came from smartphones instead of desktop computers. Facebook has proven the skeptics wrong as its mobile advertising has soared to boost its revenue to the delight of investors. The company's stock has more than doubled in value so far this year, paving the way for this secondary stock offering of 70 million shares. Of those, Zuckerberg is selling more than 41 million shares, primarily to cover the taxes he has to pay as a result of exercising an option to buy 60 million Facebook shares that carry more voting power. The 60 million shares of Facebook's Class B stock had an exercise price of just 6 cents per share, according to the company's regulatory filings. Zuckerberg's tax bill will be based on the difference between the options' exercise price and the market value of Facebook's stock. □

Seafood chain to be split from Darden's empire

MICHAEL J. de la MERCED
© 2013 New York Times

The casual restaurant empire known as Darden Restaurants began in 1968 as a single seafood restaurant on the landlocked outskirts of Orlando, Fla.

But under pressure from an activist hedge fund, Darden announced late last week that it would dispose of the chain that gave it life - Red Lobster

planned to bring back consumers after the recession. Darden is one of the biggest companies in the casual dining industry, with a market value of \$6.7 billion, but its core chains have had stagnant growth.

That struggle was again reflected in the company's latest quarterly results, including a 31 percent drop in net earnings, to \$19.8 mil-

lion. Restaurant sales for the chain to fall 4 to 5 percent this year.

Red Lobster has 705 restaurants in the United States and Canada and had annual sales of about \$2.6 billion in the company's 2013 fiscal year.

Beyond shedding Red Lobster, the restaurateur also plans other measures to cut costs, like halting expansion at its core Olive

Garden chain and slowing down opening new locations for LongHorn Steakhouse. It also intends to stop buying new brands.

"The actions we're taking are clearly exciting steps forward for Darden, and we believe these actions enhance our ability to create compelling value for our shareholders," Clarence Otis, Darden's chief executive, told analysts in a conference call on Thursday. The plan comes after months of questioning by an activist investor, the Barington Capital Group, which has proposed much bigger actions. Chief among them was breaking Darden into three companies: one containing the mature Red Lobster and Olive Garden brands; another holding younger, faster-growing chains like LongHorn and Capital Grille; and a third consolidating the chain's huge real estate holdings into an investment trust known as a REIT.

The hedge fund also called for much bigger cost savings efforts, aiming for more than \$100 million. The plan announced Thursday aims for \$60 million.

In recent weeks, Barington has hired outside advisers to help give its plan more weight. Among them are Houlihan Lokey, an investment bank, and MacKenzie Partners, a proxy solicitor firm often used in board fights. While Darden and its advisers at Goldman Sachs spent time reviewing Barington's proposals, they concluded that not all made sense, according to a person briefed on the matter. Spinning off the company's real estate would have left the restaurants paying significant amounts of rent, this person said, while separating the mature brands from the younger ones would have deprived the younger brands of much-needed cash. □



A Red Lobster restaurant in Times Square in New York. Under pressure from an activist hedge fund, the seafood chain's parent company, Darden Restaurants, announced plans to spin off or sell Red Lobster in an effort to boost its flagging stock, as well as a scaling back of expansion of other Darden chains.

(Hiroko Masuie/The New York Times)

- as one of several steps meant to bolster its stock price.

The company plans to shed Red Lobster through a tax-free spinoff to shareholders, but would be interested in a sale if it could raise more money.

Darden's plan follows months of questions and pressure from investors and analysts over how it

lion. Company executives added that they would lower their expectations for profit per share for its current fiscal year by 15 to 20 percent.

Though Red Lobster served as the basis for the Darden empire, it has become less important to the company over time. Members of the management team said they expected same-res-

taurant sales for the chain to fall 4 to 5 percent this year.

"The actions we're taking are clearly exciting steps forward for Darden, and we believe these actions enhance our ability to create compelling value for our shareholders," Clarence Otis, Darden's chief



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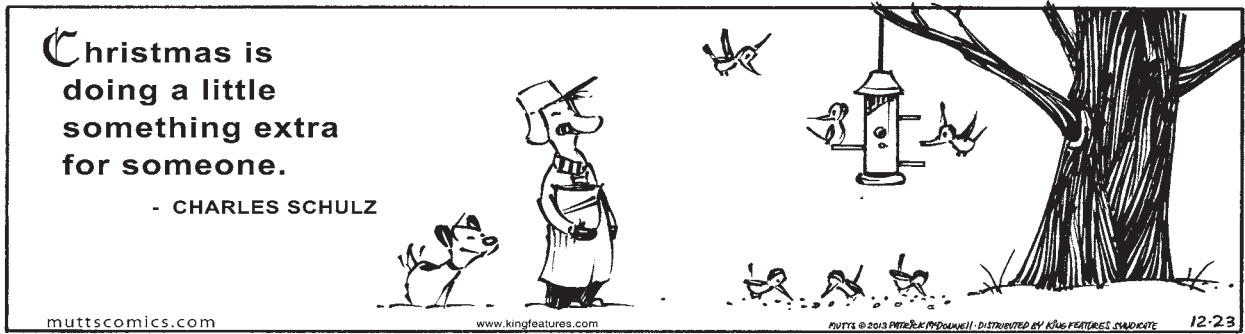
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6	7			3		1	
5					1	2	6
			5	9	6		4
		1				8	9
8		9		1		3	5
	3	7				4	
	8		6	2	7		
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	4			8		7	2

Difficulty Level ★

12/23

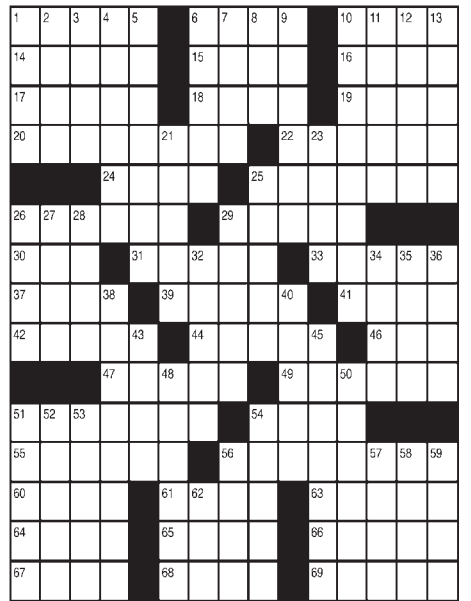
Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Saturday's puzzle answer

2	1	7	8	3	5	6	4	9
9	6	8	4	2	7	5	3	1
5	3	4	1	6	9	7	2	8
7	8	5	2	9	3	1	6	4
3	2	1	6	4	8	9	5	7
6	4	9	5	7	1	2	8	3
8	9	2	7	5	4	3	1	6
1	5	3	9	8	6	4	7	2
4	7	6	3	1	2	8	9	5

ACROSS

- Robbery
- Diminishes
- Pointed tooth
- Bird of prey
- Radiologist's negative
- Smell
- Author of juvenile fiction Horatio
- Fires, slangily
- Terrycloth wraparound
- Shy
- claf; musical symbol
- Follow closely
- Algae
- Embarrassing failure
- Greek letter
- Hostel
- Parent or grandparent
- as a peacock
- Wineglass part
- Regions
- Too inquisitive
- Pisa's tourist attraction
- Donkeys
- Last letter
- Sudden increase
- Cruise ships
- Contagious infection that causes a rash
- Escape
- Nations; WWII foe of the Axis powers
- Allen Ludden's old TV series
- Nat King
- Give the cold shoulder to
- Giggler's sound
- Ridicules
- British peer
- Pertaining to the Far East
- away; left
- Qualified
- Tale



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

12/23/13

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

DOWN

- Rip
- Vigorous
- Breakfast order
- Armadas
- Balcony
- Do very well
- Actor Pitt
- Prohibit
- Columbia Broadcasting; CBS
- Put on guard
- Clay brick
- Chivalrous
- One of the 7 Deadly Sins
- Stringed instrument
- Freeway exit
- Teasdale and Gilbert
- Clenched hand
- Bump; meet
- Once again
- Honking birds
- Hauls
- Seep out
- Drug addict

P	A	D	S	A	D	E	P	T	S	P	O	T
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O	D	O	R		R	E	S	T	S		T	A

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12/23/13

- Recolors
- Least orderly
- Peddles
- Reign
- Afternoon naps
- Water parted in
- Exodus
- Most modern
- Colorful parrot
- Wed on the run
- Mel or Woody
- Fairy tale
- Embroider with gold thread
- Cincinnati
- Raise, as kids
- Declare untrue
- Capture

No space too small, no lease too short

JOSHUA DAVID STEIN
© 2013 New York Times News

When Kanye West brought his Yeezus tour to New York last month, he needed somewhere to sell his merchandise. Instead of a concert booth, he opened a pop-up shop at 355 Bowery and sold \$35 snapback hats and \$20 tote bags.

Four days later, when the tour blew out of town, the store was quickly emptied, but not before generating a flurry of breathless coverage.

"Get your Yeezus gear here right next to the likes of Dev Hynes and Aziz Ansari, who were both able to stop by," wrote Refinery29, the website.

Lost in the hype was how the store came together. Instead of a traditional real estate agent, West's team turned to Storefront, an on-line startup that connects store owners and landlords with retail spaces they wish to rent out for short terms with artists, brands and boutiques in need of temporary quarters. With a few clicks, West's team was able to book the space for \$1,550 a day.

Started in March, Storefront currently lists about 300 spaces in San Francisco, where the company has its headquarters, and 200 spaces in New York, to which it expanded in June. The current inventory includes an 80-square-foot kiosk at the 50th Street subway station, and several stores at the Roger Smith Hotel in Manhattan.

"We're like the Airbnb of retail," said Tristan Pollock, 27, who started the service with Erik Eliason, also 27. He was referring to the popular website that lets homeowners and apartment dwellers rent their homes directly to guests. "They didn't invent renting out rooms, they just made it much easier. We didn't invent pop-ups. We're just making it easier to do



Euphorie Cosmetics, a pop-up store that sells skin care products and found the space through Storefront, at the Roger Smith Hotel in New York. The online startup, Storefront, is connecting store owners and landlords with retail spaces on a short-term basis, providing artists, brands and boutiques temporary quarters to sell their merchandise.

(Jennifer S. Altman/The New York Times)

them." idea after seeing lots of
The two founders, who live empty storefronts in their
in San Francisco, got the hometown, Minneapolis. □

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Space suit issue prompts delay of second spacewalk

MARCIA DUNN

AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida

(AP) — Astronauts removed

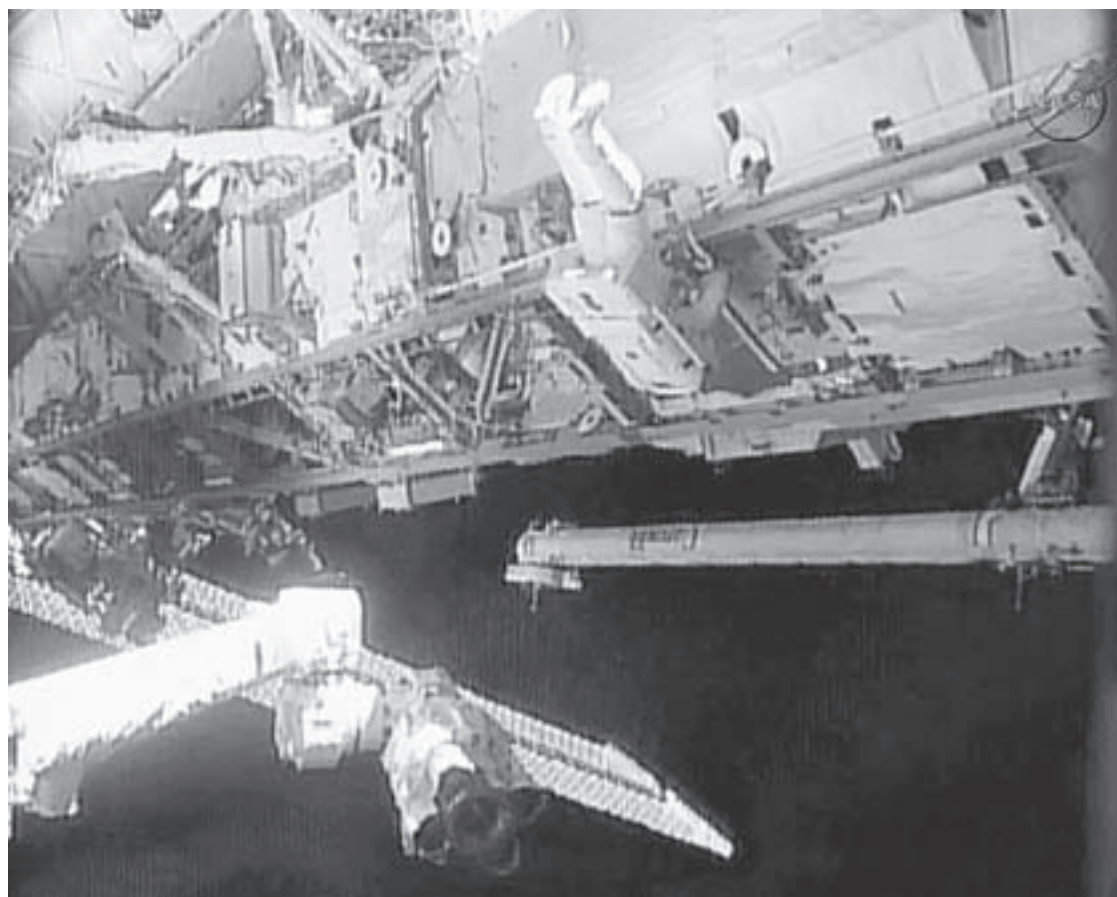
an old space station pump Saturday, sailing through the first of a series of urgent repair spacewalks to revive a crippled cooling line.

The two Americans on the crew, Rick Mastracchio and Michael Hopkins, successfully pulled out the ammonia pump with a bad valve — well ahead of schedule. That task had been planned for the next spacewalk, originally scheduled for Monday but now delayed until Tuesday, Christmas Eve, because of the need for a suit swap.

“An early Christmas,” observed Mission Control as Mastracchio tugged the refrigerator-size pump away from its nesting spot.

If Mastracchio and Hopkins keep up the quick work, two spacewalks may be enough to complete the installation of a spare pump and a third spacewalk will not be needed as originally anticipated. Several hours after Saturday’s spacewalk ended, Mission Control bumped spacewalk 2 to Tuesday to give Mastracchio enough time to prepare a spare suit. His original suit was compromised when he inadvertently turned on a water switch in the air lock at the end of Saturday’s excursion. NASA officials said Saturday night that it’s unclear whether a third spacewalk will be needed and when it might occur, if required. A third spacewalk had been slated for Christmas Day before the latest turn of events. NASA requires a day off between spacewalks for astronaut rest.

The space station breakdown 10 days earlier left one of two identical cooling loops too cold and forced the astronauts to turn off all



In this image made from video provided by NASA, astronaut Rick Mastracchio performs a space walk outside the International Space Station on Saturday, Dec. 21, 2013. Mastracchio and Michael Hopkins ventured out of the station to try to revive a crippled cooling line.

nonessential equipment inside the orbiting lab, bringing scientific research to a near-halt and leaving the station in a vulnerable state. Mission Control wanted to keep the spacewalkers out even longer Saturday to get even further ahead, but a cold and uncomfortable Mastracchio requested to go back. The spacewalk ended after 5½ hours, an hour short on time but satisfyingly long on content. Earlier, Mastracchio managed to unhook all the ammonia fluid and electrical lines on the pump with relative ease, occasionally releasing a flurry of frozen ammonia flakes that brushed against his suit. A small O-ring floated away, but he managed to retrieve it.

“I got it, I got it, I got it. Barely,” Mastracchio said as he stretched out his hand.

“Don’t let that go, that’s a stocking stuffer,” Mission

Control replied.

“Don’t tell my wife,” Mastracchio said, chuckling, as he put it in a small pouch for trash.

Mastracchio, a seven-time spacewalker, and Hopkins, making his first, wore extra safety gear as they worked outside. NASA wanted to prevent a recurrence of the helmet flooding that nearly drowned an Italian astronaut last summer, so Saturday’s spacewalkers had snorkels in their suits and water-absorbent pads in their helmets.

To everyone’s relief, the spacewalkers remained dry while outside. But midway through the excursion, Mastracchio’s toes were so cold that he had to crank up the heat in his boots. Mission Control worried aloud whether it was wise to extend the spacewalk to get ahead, given Mastracchio’s discomfort.

Not quite two hours later, Mastracchio had enough as he clutched the old pump. When Mission Control suggested even more get-ahead chores, he replied, “I’d like to stow this old module and kind of clean up and call it a day.” He said a couple of things were bothering him, not just temperature, and declined to elabo-

rate when asked by Mission Control what was wrong.

Flight controllers obliged him. Once the old pump was secured to a temporary location, the spacewalkers started gathering up their tools to go in.

Adding to the excitement 260 miles (418 kilometers) up, a smoke alarm went off in the space station as the astronauts toiled outside. It was quickly found to be a false alarm.

The pump replacement is a huge undertaking attempted only once before, back in 2010 on this very unit. The two astronauts who tackled the job three years ago were in Mission Control, offering guidance. Mastracchio promised to bring back a wire tie installed on the pump by the previous spacewalkers. “Oh, awesome, thanks Rick,” replied the astronaut in Mission Control who put it on.

The 780-pound (354-kilogram) pump is about the size of a double-door refrigerator and extremely cumbersome to handle, with plumbing full of toxic ammonia. Any traces of ammonia on the spacesuits were dissipated before the astronauts went back inside, to avoid further contamination.

NASA’s plan initially called

for the pump to be disconnected in the first spacewalk, pulled out on the second spacewalk and a fresh spare put in, and then all the hookups of the new pump completed in the third outing.

In the days following the Dec. 11 breakdown, flight controllers attempted in vain to fix the bad valve through remote commanding. Then they tried using a different valve to regulate the temperature of the overly cold loop, with some success. But last Tuesday, NASA decided the situation was severe enough to press ahead with the spacewalks. Although the astronauts were safe and comfortable, NASA did not want to risk another failure and a potential loss of the entire cooling system, needed to radiate the heat generated by on-board equipment.

NASA delayed a delivery mission from Wallops Island, Virginia, to accommodate the spacewalks. That flight by the private firm Orbital Sciences Corp., which should have occurred this past week, is now targeted for Jan. 7.

Until Saturday, U.S. spacewalks had been on hold since July, when an Italian astronaut’s helmet was flooded with water from the cooling system of his suit. Luca Parmitano barely got back inside alive.

Engineers traced the problem to a device in the suit that turned out to be contaminated — how and why, no one yet knows.

For Saturday’s spacewalk, Hopkins wore Parmitano’s suit, albeit with newly installed and thoroughly tested components.

Just in case, NASA had Mastracchio and Hopkins build snorkels out of plastic tubing from their suits, before going out. The snorkels will be used in case water starts building up in their helmets. They also put absorbent pads in their helmets; the pads were launched from Earth following the July scare. None of the precautions were needed, in the end.

Besides the two Americans, three Russian and one Japanese astronaut are living on the space station, all men. □

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'The Hobbit' holds off 'Anchorman 2' with \$31.5M

JAKE COYLE

AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — On a busy pre-Christmas weekend at the box office, "The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug" held off a very different sequel, "Anchorman 2: The Legend Continues." Peter Jackson's "Hobbit" sequel took in \$31.5 million in its second weekend of release for Warner Bros., according to studio estimates Sunday. That topped Will Ferrell's "Anchorman" sequel, which nevertheless opened strongly in second place. The Paramount Pictures comedy made \$26.8 million over the three-day weekend and \$40 million since opening Tuesday night. The much-marketed "Anchorman 2" actually outperformed "The Hobbit" (which has now passed \$300 million worldwide) on Friday, but failed to best it over Saturday and Sunday. But the \$50 million comedy, which Paramount initially turned down, also suggested it will be more popular abroad than most comedies. It made \$13.4 million in six international markets. The 2004 original opened with \$28.4 million, but only grossed \$5.3 million internationally.



This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows Martin Freeman, left, and John Callen in a scene from "The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug."

Associated Press

"'Anchorman' will have a much larger footprint internationally than the last 'Anchorman' did," said Don Harris, head of domestic distribution for Paramount. "Will Ferrell has done a really good job of turning this character into something that travels around the world."

David O. Russell's fictionalization of the 1970s Abscam political corruption

investigation "American Hustle" earned a robust \$19.1 million in its first week of nationwide expansion. The Sony Pictures film, starring Christian Bale, Amy Adams and Jennifer Lawrence, got a boost from its co-leading seven Golden Globes nominations.

"It's such a crowd-pleaser as well as a critical hit," said Sony's distribution head Rory Bruer. "We have so

much more to look forward to, including Christmas Day."

The pre-Christmas weekend is a sought-after release date, one that usually offers films especially good legs at the box office as moviegoers flood theaters over the coming weeks. The weekend box office was up nearly 30 percent over the same weekend last year.

But this year's holiday frame will be particularly competitive. The crowded field of movie openings Wednesday includes Martin Scorsese's "The Wolf of Wall Street," Ben Stiller's "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty," the Robert De Niro and Sylvester Stallone comedy "Grudge Match," the Justin Bieber documentary "Justin Bieber's Believe" and Keanu Reeves' "47 Ronin." "It is going to be one heck of a crowded Christmas Day at the movie theater," said Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst for box-office tracker Rentrak. "This is setting up to be perhaps one of the biggest Christmas Days ever." One obvious casualty from the many options at the multiplexes was 20th Century Fox's "Walking With Dinosaurs," a 3-D attraction that hoped to draw moviegoers with digital dinosaurs. Made for \$85 million, it fell flat with just \$7.3 million over the weekend. The family market has instead been cornered by Disney's animated "Frozen," which added \$19.2 million over the weekend. In five weeks of release, it's made \$344 million worldwide. □

Lt Gov: Duck Dynasty important to Louisiana

JANET McCONNAUGHEY

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Louisiana's lieutenant governor says the "Duck Dynasty" reality TV show is important to state tourism — and he could help connect the Robertson family with new producers if they cannot reach agreement with the A&E cable TV network. The network suspended patriarch Phil Robertson last week for telling GQ magazine that gays are sinners akin to adulterers and swindlers. "Regardless of one's views on Phil Robertson's statements, 'Duck Dynasty' has been an important representa-

tion of the state of Louisiana, inspiring prospective visitors and investors since its debut," Lt. Governor Jay Dardenne said in a statement emailed Saturday. The show is produced around the Robertson family's home base in Ouachita Parish. KNOE-TV of Monroe reported in February that the show was bringing people from around the country who wouldn't otherwise stop in northeast Louisiana. The Duck Commander warehouse — the headquarters of the Robertson family's multi-million-dollar business that was launched by making hand-crafted duck calls — has become

a tourist attraction, said Alana Cooper, director of the Monroe-West Monroe Visitors and Convention Bureau. Dardenne, whose job includes running the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, said the show's audience of millions is eager to visit Louisiana.

"If the Robertson family cannot come to an agreement with A&E and wants to continue the show, Louisiana already has the infrastructure in place to maintain their record-breaking program," he wrote. The lieutenant governor did not immediately answer a request for comment Sunday.



This undated image released by A&E shows brothers Silas "Uncle Si" Robertson, left, and Phil Robertson from the popular series "Duck Dynasty."

Associated Press

Dardenne, who authored the state's film and TV tax credit program, said he would use his influence in the state's industry to help the Robertsons.

Gov. Bobby Jindal said Thursday that everyone is entitled to express their opinions.

More than 1.7 million fans have liked an impromptu Facebook page titled "Boycott A&E Until Phil Robertson Is Put Back On Duck Dynasty" — one of numerous pages with similar names, though none of the others has even 1 percent as many "likes." □

Beyonce talks surprise album, success at NYC event

MESFIN FEKADU

AP Music Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Beyonce had her doubts minutes before her new album's surprise release, despite all the hard work she put in on the songs and videos.

"I was terrified. I was so scared. I already envisioned like the worst things that could happen," Beyonce said Saturday at a screening for her new music videos. "I was really nervous because this was a huge risk." The singer's fifth album debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard charts this week after it was released without the public knowing. "Beyonce" sold 617,000 units in the U.S. in a week; it has sold more than 1 million albums worldwide. The album includes 14 songs and 17 videos, which fans were able to see during the screening at the School of Visual Arts in New York. Beyonce answered fans' questions via Instagram, including one about her opening up personally on the new album.

"I'm very private and I'm very respectful, and I think



Beyonce performs onstage at her "Mrs. Carter Show World Tour 2013," on Wednesday, December 19, 2013 at the Barclays Center in Brooklyn, New York. **Associated Press**

it just took me no longer being someone's child — once I became a mother, I felt like I could tear those fourth walls and I just felt like it was time," she said. "I completely feel liberated." The album features collaborations with her husband Jay Z, Justin Timberlake, Drake and her daughter,

Blue Ivy. "Beyonce" is the follow-up to 2011's "4," the first album the singer released on her production company, Parkwood Entertainment, after parting ways professionally with her father-manager, Mathew Knowles.

"I felt like I wanted follow in the footsteps of Ma-

donna and be a powerhouse and have my own empire," she said to cheers from the crowd. "And (to) show other women when you get to this point in your career, you don't have to go sign with someone else and share your money and your success, you can do it yourself."

The album's unconventional release became one of the year's top pop culture and social media moments. Beyonce, 32, said she became bored in the music industry after her last release, and the new album is a reflection of experimentation and growth. "Honestly I was at a point where I felt like, you know, everything feels the same ... that's how I felt and if I could not challenge that, then maybe it's time for me to do something else or develop more artists, which is something I want to do," she said. "I just hope that I continue to move forward and challenge myself, and I think now that I've become a mother, I just want my legacy to inspire people."

She added that the goal of the new album was not to produce No. 1 hits, but to showcase her evolution and create her own lane.

"I took all of my insecurities, all of my doubts, all of my fears and everything I've learned over the 17 years and I applied it into this project," she said. □

Fats Domino named 'honorary grand marshal'

STACEY PLAISANCE

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — The music of rock 'n' roll Hall of Fame performer Fats Domino will "float" through the streets of New Orleans this Carnival season.

Domino has been named honorary grand marshal of the Krewe of Orpheus, the star-studded Carnival club that traditionally parades the night before Mardi Gras.

Although he won't be riding in the March 3 parade, his eldest son, Antoine Domino III, is expected to ride on a float equipped with a piano and speakers to perform his father's greatest hits, such as "Blue Monday," "The Fat Man," "Blueberry Hill" and "Walking to New Orleans."

Other family members are expected to ride and throw coaster-size, gold-record doubloons and other Fats Domino-themed trinkets from the float.

New Orleans artist Michael



Legendary musician Fats Domino is named "Honorary Grand Marshall" of the Krewe of Orpheus, the star-studded Carnival club that traditionally parades the night before Mardi Gras, Friday, Dec. 20, 2013 in New Orleans. **Associated Press**

Hunt has designed a poster to commemorate the occasion. The posters will be autographed by Domino and available for purchase.

Mardi Gras is March 4.

Domino, 85, moving a little slow and his speech low, smiled for friends, family and a handful of news me-

dia who gathered Friday in his suburban New Orleans living room as he was honored by the Krewe of Orpheus with a medallion proclaiming him honorary grand marshal.

"I'm happy to do it," he said, but added that he hasn't changed his mind about riding on a float.

"No way," he said.

Referring to the fact that his son would fill in for him, he said, with a smile, "He should be all right."

Domino has been asked to participate in Mardi Gras for years, but this is the first time in recent history he's agreed. "It's jaw-dropping," said Michael Murphy, an officer for Orpheus. "It's the biggest blessing that we could ever ask for. We are extremely honored." Domino, known for his reclusive nature, rarely leaves the suburban New Orleans home where he's lived since Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Water poured through a broken levee,

flooding Domino's home in the Lower 9th Ward. His belongings, instruments, pictures and a lifetime of memorabilia were damaged or lost in Katrina's floodwaters.

But two of his pianos were salvaged and are on public display in New Orleans, though neither of them is playable.

A white Steinway grand piano had its classic looks restored and will be part of the Louisiana State Museum's music exhibition opening in 2014. His other Steinway piano is on permanent display at the Presbytere museum in the exhibition "Living with Hurricanes: Katrina and Beyond." Domino, born in New Orleans in February 1928, sold more than 65 million records between 1950 and 1963, making Billboard's pop chart 77 times and its rhythm and blues chart 61 times. The pianist, singer and songwriter is regarded as one of the fore-

runners of rock music, beloved by musicians including the Beatles, Elvis Presley and Billy Joel.

Reminded of his legacy and the inspiration he has been for so many musicians, Fat's simply said, "That's nice."

"He's so humble," Murphy said. It's not surprising that Orpheus wanted to honor Domino and his music in some way. The Orpheus parade organization is rooted in music. It was co-founded in 1993 by New Orleans native singer Harry Connick Jr. and Sonny Borey, who serves as the parade organization's captain. Each year musical guests are invited to ride in the parade and perform at the glitzy ball held afterward at a nearby convention center.

Orpheus leaders have already announced that the 1970s rock band Cheap Trick will be headlining the 2014 Orpheuscapade gala. □

Secretary Kerry's Derring-Do



THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN
© 2013 New York Times

I don't know whether Secretary of State John Kerry will succeed in his two big chosen priorities: trying to forge an Israeli-Palestinian peace and a détente with Iran that deprives it of a nuclear weapon. But I admire his relentlessness. I admire the way he dares to fail - the only way to become a consequential secretary of state. And I admire his strategy: trying to construct a diplomacy that makes it impossible for Israel, the Palestinians and Iran to continue avoiding their big existential choices.

Strip away the details of the Iran deal and, at its core, Kerry is offering Tehran this choice: Do you want to be a big North Korea or a Persian China? If you want your power and influence to be defined by how many nuclear weapons you can make, you can do that, but you will be a big failed state, largely isolated from the rest of the world, with your people never able to realize their full potential. If you want your greatness to be defined by the talent and energy of your people - which will be fully unleashed once sanctions are removed and they can reintegrate with the world after 34 years of semi-isolation - you'll have to abandon all nuclear enrichment except for limited research and electrical needs. You choose. A better deal is not coming.

To Palestinians, Kerry is saying: You want to maintain the unity of the Palestinian people; you want an independent state in 100 percent of the West Bank with a capital in East Jerusalem; you want the total removal as soon as possible of all Israeli troops and settlements; and you want to be able to maintain some hostility to Israel in your textbooks and diplomacy. I can probably get you 95 percent of the West Bank with swaps from Israel to compensate for the rest and a toehold in East Jerusalem, but you'll have to give up the hostility and probably your unity - because there will be virtually no return of refugees to pre-1967 Israel, and Israeli troops will have to be permitted to maintain defensive positions in the Jordan Valley for at least a decade. I know, it is half a loaf, but it is real bread. You can always wait another 100 years.

To Israelis, Kerry is saying: You want a Jewish state, a state in all of the Land of Israel and

a democratic state. You can have two out of three. You can be Jewish and in all the Land of Israel, but you will not be democratic, because the Arabs in the West Bank and Israel will constitute too big a voting bloc for you to tolerate democratically. You can be Jewish and democratic, but then you can't hold onto the West Bank. You can be democratic and in all the Land of Israel, but then you can't be a Jewish state (see point No. 1). You choose. A better deal is not coming.

The truth is, no security arrangement is foolproof. The only thing that might be foolproof is, along with the best security tools, giving Palestinians a state worth their defending and preserving by surprising them with a little trust - exactly the way Nelson Mandela surprised South African whites. What Palestinians do and say matters. But what Israelis do and say also conditions what Palestinians do and say - and vice versa. Up to now, neither this Palestinian leadership nor this Israeli leadership has shown an ounce of "Mandela-ism." Everything they do to and for each other is grudging and fraught with suspicion, so there is never any sense of surprise. Without some trust breakthrough, I don't see how a big deal gets done.

But the status quo is not benign. Israeli-Palestinian clashes in the West Bank are mounting. With no deal, it could easily explode. Also, Israel's steady expansion of settlements in the West Bank is giving its enemies more fodder to delegitimize the Jewish state. I am no fan of settlements, but I am also no fan of bigoted, one-sided boycotts of Israeli academic institutions like the one announced Monday by the American Studies Association, or ASA. (China threatens to throw out the U.S. press. Russia tries to rip Ukraine away from the European Union. But the ASA singles out Israel for condemnation?) Does the ASA even believe that Jews have a right to their own state anywhere in Palestine? After all, the ASA statement says it opposes "the Israeli occupation of Palestine," not specifying the West Bank. But I fear for Israel. If Israel doesn't stop the settlement madness, denying the Palestinians a West Bank state, it will fit the caricature of its worst enemies.

No question - for America, Israel and the Palestinians, no deal is still better than a bad deal that blows up the morning after.

What Kerry is trying to put together are decent, hard-headed deals, in which opportunities can legitimately outweigh the risks for all sides. His chance of succeeding on the Iran or Israel-Palestine fronts is very low, but I greatly respect his daring to fail. □



Osborne And The Stooges



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There was, I'm pretty sure, an episode of "The Three Stooges" in which Curly kept banging his head against a wall. When Moe asked him why, he replied, "Because it feels so good when I stop."

Well, I thought it was funny. But I never imagined that Curly's logic would one day become the main rationale that senior finance officials use to defend their disastrous policies. Some background: In 2010, most of the nation's wealthy nations, although still deeply depressed in the wake of the financial crisis, turned to fiscal austerity, slashing spending and, in some cases, raising taxes in an effort to reduce budget deficits that had surged as their economies collapsed. Basic economics said that austerity in an already depressed economy would deepen the depression. But the "austerians," as many of us began calling them, insisted that spending cuts would lead to economic expansion, because they would improve business confidence.

The result came as close to a controlled experiment as one ever gets in macroeconomics. Three years went by, and the confidence fairy never made an appearance. In Europe, where the austere ideology took hold most firmly, the nascent economic recovery soon turned into a double-dip recession. In fact, at this point key

measures of economic performance in both the euro area and Britain are lagging behind where they were at this stage of the Great Depression.

It's true that the human cost has been nothing like what happened in the 1930s. But that's thanks to government policies like employment protection and a strong social safety net - the very policies austerians insisted must be dismantled in the name of "structural reform."

Was it really austerity that did the damage? Well, the correlation is very clear: the harsher the austerity, the worse the growth performance. Consider the case of Ireland, one of the first nations to impose extreme austerity, and widely cited in early 2010 as a role model. Three years later, after repeated declarations that its economy had turned the corner, Ireland still has double-digit unemployment, even though hundreds of thousands of working-age Irish citizens have emigrated.

The depressing effect of austerity in a slump is, in short, as clear a story as anything in the annals of economic history. But the austerians were never going to admit their error. (In my experience, almost nobody ever does.) And now they've seized on the latest data to claim vindication, after all. You see, some austerity countries have started growing again. Britain appears to be experiencing a significant bounce; Ireland has finally had a decent quarter; even Spain's economy is showing faint signs of life. And the austerians are holding victory parades.

Perhaps the most brazen example is George Osborne, Britain's chancellor of the Exchequer, and the prime mover behind his country's austerity agenda. No sooner had positive growth numbers appeared than Osborne declared that "Those in favor of a Plan B" - that is, an alternative to austerity - "have lost the argument."

OK, let's think about this claim, above and beyond the general observation that fluctuations over the course of a quarter or two generally don't tell you much.

First of all, Britain's recent growth doesn't change the reality that almost six years have passed since the nation entered recession, and real GDP is still below its previous peak. Taking the long view, that's still a story of dismal failure - as I said, a track record worse than Britain's performance in the Great Depression. Second, it's important to understand the history of austerity in Osborne's Britain. His government spent its first two years doing big things: sharply reducing public investment, increasing the national sales tax, and more. After that it slowed the pace; it didn't reverse austerity, but it didn't make it much more severe than it already was.

And here's the thing: Economies do tend to grow unless they keep being hit by adverse shocks. It's not surprising, then, that the British economy eventually picked up once Osborne let up on the punishment.

But is this a vindication of his austerity policies? Only if you accept Three Stooges logic, in which it makes sense to keep banging your head against a wall because it feels good when you stop.

Now, I'm well aware that the austerians may win political points all the same. Political scientists tell us that voters are myopic, that they judge leaders based on economic growth in the year or so before an election, not on overall performance in office. So a government can preside over years of depression, yet win re-election if it can engineer an uptick late in the game. But that's politics. When it comes to economics, there's only one possible answer to the absurd triumphalism of the austerians: Nyuk. Nyuk. Nyuk. □

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